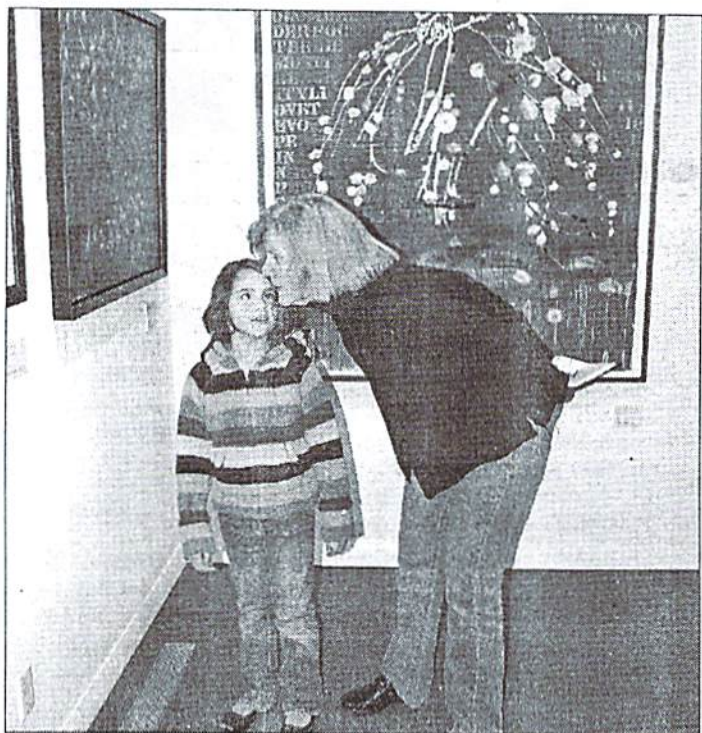


The Art Complex Museum is a hidden gem – literally. The building is set back from the parking lot's entrance off Alden Street, so someone driving by might not even see the distinctive rolling curves of the museum's roof (which were modeled after the waves at Duxbury Beach.) But those who do stop will discover a place where art, family, learning and community all intersect.

The Art Complex Museum was founded in 1971 by Carl and Edith Weyerhaeuser. Carl Weyerhaeuser's interest in art started at a young age; when he graduated from Harvard, he turned down his father's offer of a car for a Rembrandt print.



Craig Bloodgood, contemporary curator at the Art Complex Museum, stands outside the museum among the many outdoor sculptures. Bloodgood has worked for the museum for 10 years.



Kathy Dowling and Hadley Wilson inspect a painting in the Bengtz Gallery during the Duxbury Art Association's annual gallery showing.

Although Carl Weyerhaeuser had established quite a collection, especially of prints, by the 1970s, the idea for the museum itself came from Edith.

"My mother had the idea of building a museum and doing something with Dad's wonderful collection," said the museum's current director, Charles Weyerhaeuser.

She also came up with the name for the museum. She had a vision of the place being more than just a collection of things hanging on the wall, but rather a place where the community could come learn about art, hear music, walk the grounds, or take a painting lesson.

"It really is more than just a museum," said Laura Doherty, who works at the museum.

Weyerhaeuser pointed out that original plans for the museum included a restaurant,

and things like the outdoor summer concerts that have become an annual tradition were always part of his parents' vision.

"My father and mother loved having music in their home," he said.

The Weyerhaeusers had spent summers in Duxbury and had fallen in love with the rural, seaside community. They bought the Judah Alden home (now a studio where many classes are taught) and built the museum on 11 acres of land that used to be part of John Alden's farm.

To help realize their dream, the Weyerhaeusers enlisted Ture Bengtz, a Scandinavian artist Carl Weyerhaeuser had met at the Museum School in Boston. Bengtz helped conceptualize the building itself

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A visit to the Art Complex

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(the roof waves were his idea) and was the museum's first director until his death in 1974. The Art Complex Museum's main gallery is named after him.

Today the museum has about 6,000 pieces, with a focus on American paintings, American and European prints, and Asian art, and is well-known for their collection of Shaker art. Shakers are an American religious community related to the Quakers, and they are known for their furniture which is plain, durable and functional. "Their motto was function first, but their work was really beautiful too," said Doherty.

Carl Weyerhaeuser was more than just a collector. When he became interested in Japanese art, he didn't just buy pieces, he traveled to Japan, met the artists and experienced the culture.

"He didn't just collect the items, but sat down and

had tea," said Charles Weyerhaeuser. "He really enjoyed talking with the artists."

In fact, on one of his trips to Japan Weyerhaeuser brought back one of the museum's most distinctive features: the Japanese tea hut.

The hut is protected inside a garage during the winter but in the summer months, tea ceremonies are held monthly, on Sunday afternoons. Residents are invited to come participate in the ritualistic Japanese tea ceremony.

"It's about hospitality and being gentle and nice to people," said Craig Bloodgood, the museum's contemporary curator.

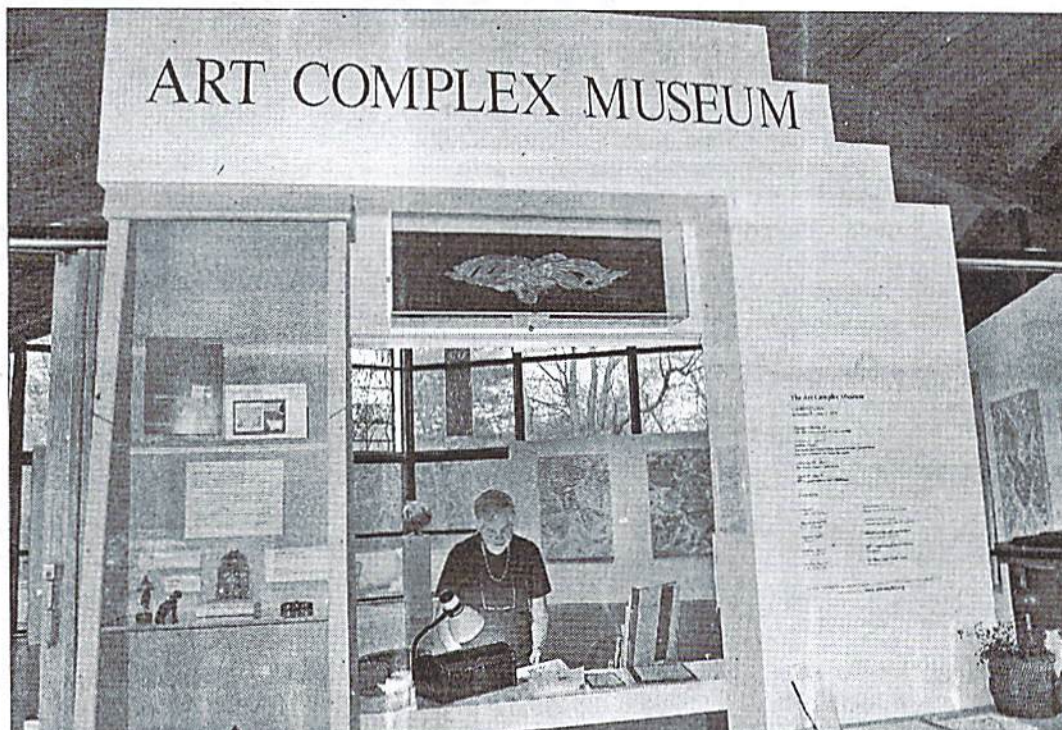
Bloodgood, who has worked with the museum in different capacities for 10 years, helps set up the exhibits, which change about every three months, and works with artists. He's also something of an artist-in-resident himself, working with found objects in a studio in one of the museum's outbuildings. (Readers

may have seen his Christmas tree, made out of discarded toys from the Duxbury transfer station, at the library in recent months.)

The Art Complex Museum is about more than art. In addition to the tea ceremony being open to the public, third grade students from the Chandler school are invited to learn about the tea ceremony. Classes are held at the Judah Alden house, and the museum also works with the Crossroads for Kids program at Camp Wing. They also work in conjunction with the Duxbury Art Association, hosting their annual gallery showing. Most of the ACM's programs are free or low cost.

Weyerhaeuser said that he hopes that visitors to the museum get "a little flavor of what a museum is about."

"It feels good to see that the place is being used and enjoyed," he said. "My parents' dream is still here after 38 years."



Nancy Teravainen greets guests upon their entrance to the museum. The Art Complex Museum has two galleries, the Ture Bengtz Gallery and the one seen behind Teravainen.

ART COMPLEX MUSEUM